

Message Text

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14

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FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1987

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SUBJ: SOUTHWEST PACIFIC CONSULTATIVE GROUP AND VISIT
OF INDONESIAN FOREIGN MINISTER MALIK

REF: A) STATE 222989 B) CANBERRA 6081

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: INDONESIAN FOREIGN MINISTER MALIK HAS DEVELOPED SOMEWHAT CONCEPT OF NEW SOUTHWEST PACIFIC CONSULTATIVE GROUP AS SUB-REGIONAL ORGANIZATION DISTINCT FROM BUT FUNCTIONING LIKE ASEAN. HE MADE CLEAR THAT IT IS NECESSARY TO GO SLOWLY IN DEVELOPING REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVING CHINA AND JAPAN, AS NUMBER OF SOUTHEAST COUNTRIES DO NOT HAVE RELATIONS WITH CHINA. COMPOSITION OF SOUTHWEST PACIFIC CONSULTATIVE GROUP IS PUZZLING, AS IT APPEARS INCOMPATIBLE WITH AUSTRALIAN EFFORTS TO RE-DIRECT AND RE-ORGANIZE SOUTH PACIFIC COMMISSION. END SUMMARY.

2. IN PUBLIC APPEARANCES DURING VISIT TO AUSTRALIA MALIK HAS THROWN SOME FURTHER LIGHT ON NATURE OF SOUTHWEST PACIFIC CONSULTATIVE GROUP, THOUGH CONCEPT REMAINS NEBULOUS AND INCOMPLETELY DEVELOPED.

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3. AT NATIONAL PRESS CLUB LUNCHEON NOV 9 MALIK, IN

RESPONSE TO QUESTION SAID HE SAW VALUE IN QTE SUB REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS END QTE. HE SAID HE THOUGHT THAT ASEAN WAS ONE SUCH SUB-GROUPING, BUT IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT FOR PAPUA NEW GUINEA TO BECOME ASSOCIATED WITH IT, DUE TO OPPOSITION FROM OTHER ASEAN COUNTRIES. HOWEVER, HE THOUGHT ANOTHER SUB-GROUPING MIGHT BE ESTABLISHED INVOLVING AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND, INDONESIA, AND PAPUA NEW GUINEA IN THE FIRST INSTANCE, WITH OTHER COUNTRIES (NOT SPECIFIED) PERHAPS JOINING LATER.

4. IN INTERVIEW WITH SYDNEY MORNING HERALD NOV 10 MALIK WAS SOMEWHAT MORE EXPLICIT. (INDONESIAN EMBASSY MINISTER COUNSELOR WIJARTO TOLD EMBOFF NOV 12 THAT HERALD INTERVIEW CORRECTLY PRESENTED MALIK'S VIEWS. WE ARE POUCHING COPY TO EA/ANP.) MALIK QUOTED BY HERALD AS STATING, QTE THE PROBLEM AS I SEE IT IS THAT CURRENT SUGGESTIONS LIKE MR. WHITLAM'S FOR LARGER REGIONAL GROUPINGS TO INCLUDE CHINA AND JAPAN ARE TOO AMBITIOUS. THE TIME IS NOT RIPE. SOME COUNTRIES IN THE AREA HAVE NOT YET REALLY WORKED OUT THEIR ECONOMIC RELATIONS WITH JAPAN, AND SOME HAVE NO POLITICAL OR DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH CHINA. IT IS GOING TO BE SOME TIME BEFORE THEY DO. INDONESIA, FOR EXAMPLE, HAS SUSPENDED RELATIONS WITH PEKING, WHILE THE OTHER ASEAN COUNTRIES HAVE NO RELATIONS AT ALL. IT IS FAR TOO EARLY FOR REGIONAL ARRANGEMENTS IN THE PACIFIC AND SOUTHEAST ASIA TO INCLUDE CHINA. END QTE.

5. EMBASSY HAS NOT YET REVIEWED MALIK VISIT WITH DFA, SINCE MOST KNOWLEDGEABLE DFA OFFICER IS WITH MALIK PARTY IN PNG. MALIK LEAVES PORT MORESBY NOW 14 FOR BRISBANE WHERE HE WILL TAKE PLANE FOR JAKARTA. WE WILL EXPLORE VISIT WITH DFA AT FIRST FEASIBLE OPPORTUNITY.

6. COMMENT: MALIK APPEARS NO MORE ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT A NEW REGIONAL GROUPING, INCLUDING AUSTRALIA, THAN HE WAS DURING PRIME MINISTER WHITLAM'S VISIT TO
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INDONESIA IN FEB, 1973. WE WERE SOMEWHAT PUZZLED BY MAKE-UP OF SOUTHWEST PACIFIC GROUP AS MALIK PICTURED IT TO AMBASSADOR GREN (REF B), AS IT IS ESSENTIALLY INCOMPATIBLE, FOR EXAMPLE, WITH ONGOING AUSTRALIAN EFFORTS TO CHANGE THE SOUTH PACIFIC COMMISSION. WE WILL GO INTO THIS MATTER MORE FULLY IN WRAPUP ON MALIK VISIT.
HARROP

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